

What is claimed is:

1 1. An image forming apparatus for transmitting and
2 receiving data to/from an external apparatus, the image forming
3 apparatus comprising:
4 a communication unit that accesses the external apparatus,
5 and when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
6 to the image forming apparatus, obtains the image data;
7 an image forming unit that performs an image forming
8 operation according to the obtained image data;
9 a power-saving control unit that controls a power-saving
10 mode to be activated or deactivated; and
11 a communication control unit that controls the
12 communication unit to make an access to the external apparatus
13 while the power-saving mode is deactivated.

1 2. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, wherein
2 the access is made when the power-saving mode gets
3 deactivated.

1 3. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, wherein
2 the access is made when an image forming operation ends.

1 4. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, wherein
2 the communication control unit further controls the
3 communication unit to make another access to the external

4 apparatus when a first time period has passed after a last access
5 to the external apparatus.

1 5. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, further
2 comprising:

3 a prohibition unit that prohibits the communication unit
4 from accessing the external apparatus, until a second time period
5 has passed after a last access to the external apparatus.

1 6. The image forming apparatus of Claim 5, wherein
2 the power-saving control unit activates the power-saving
3 mode when no image forming operation is performed for a third
4 time period, and the second time period is shorter than the
5 third time period.

1 7. The image forming apparatus of Claim 6, wherein
2 the external apparatus functions as an electronic mail
3 server, and the image data that the communication unit obtains
4 from the external apparatus is image data attached to electronic
5 mail.

1 8. An image forming system comprising: a server for storing
2 image data; and an image forming apparatus for transmitting
3 and receiving data to/from the server via a network, wherein
4 the server includes:

5 a storage unit that stores image data in correspondence
6 with a network address; and
7 a transmission unit that, in response to a request
8 by an external terminal, transmits image data that corresponds
9 to a network address of the external terminal, and
10 the image forming apparatus includes:
11 a request unit that accesses the server and requests,
12 from the server, image data addressed to the image forming
13 apparatus;
14 a reception unit that receives the image data transmitted
15 from the server;
16 an image forming unit that performs an image forming
17 operation according to the received image data;
18 a power-saving control unit that controls a power-saving
19 mode to be activated or deactivated; and
20 a request control unit that controls the request unit
21 to access the server while the power-saving mode is deactivated.

1 9. An image forming method executed in an image forming
2 apparatus, the image forming apparatus having a power-saving
3 unit that controls a power-saving mode to be activated or
4 deactivated, and being for transmitting and receiving data
5 to/from an external apparatus, the image forming method
6 comprising:

7 an image-data obtaining step of making an access to the

8 external apparatus while the power-saving mode is deactivated,
9 and of, when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
10 to the image forming apparatus, obtaining the image data; and
11 an image forming step of performing an image forming
12 operation according to the obtained image data.

1 10. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the access is made when the power-saving mode gets
3 deactivated.

1 11. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the access is made when an image forming operation ends.

1 12. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 in the image-data obtaining step, another access to the
3 external apparatus is performed when a first time period has
4 passed after a last access to the external apparatus.

1 13. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the image-data obtaining step includes an access
3 prohibition substep of prohibiting an access to the external
4 apparatus, until a second time period has passed after a last
5 access to the external apparatus.

1 14. The image forming method of Claim 13, wherein

the power-saving control unit activates the power-saving mode when no image forming operation is performed for a third time period, and the second time period is shorter than the third time period.

15. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein the external apparatus functions as an electronic mail server, and the image data obtained at the image-data obtaining step from the external apparatus is image data attached to electronic mail.

16. A program executed in an image forming apparatus, the image forming apparatus having a power-saving unit that controls a power-saving mode to be activated or deactivated, and being for transmitting and receiving data to/from an external apparatus, the program making the image forming apparatus perform:

an image-data obtaining operation of accessing the external apparatus while the power-saving mode is deactivated, and of, when the external apparatus stores image data addressed to the image forming apparatus, obtaining the image data; and

an image forming operation of performing an image forming operation according to the obtained image data.

17. A computer-readable recording medium that stores

2 therein a program executed in an image forming apparatus, the
3 image forming apparatus having a power-saving unit that controls
4 a power-saving mode to be activated or deactivated, and being
5 for transmitting and receiving data to/from an external
6 apparatus, the program making the image forming apparatus
7 perform:

8 an image-data obtaining operation of accessing the
9 external apparatus while the power-saving mode is deactivated,
10 and of, when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
11 to the image forming apparatus, obtaining the image data; and
12 an image forming operation of performing an image forming
13 operation according to the obtained image data.